

The Coins of Ahmad Sháh Abdállí or Ahmad Sháh Durrání.—By CHAS. J. RODGERS, *Principal, Normal College, Amritsar.*

(With Plate II.)

The Panjáb, the Border land of India has been invaded oftener than any other country in the whole world. The more than dozen incursions of Mahmúd of Gazní, the five or six of Muhammad Gorí, the terrible visitation of Taimúr, the plundering expedition of the execrable Nádir, and the frequent invasion of Ahmad Sháh the conquerors of the Mahrattas at Pánípat were all borne by the Panjáb. Scarcely any other part of India suffered from them, or if they did, the Panjáb suffered both before and after. No good accrued to any province of India from any one of these inflictions. The work done by each of these scourges was one of destruction and not of construction. No public works attest the presence of these mighty ones in India. And yet each one has left behind him some sign of his hated though short rule. Mr. Thomas has edited the coins struck in India by Mahmúd and his successors, and those of Muhammad Gorí. I myself edited in a late paper the only known Indian coin of Tímúr, a miserable copper damrí. In my late furlough I edited the coins which Nádir Sháh struck during his short and disastrous visit to Dehlí. I propose in the present paper to give a short account of the coins which the successor of Nádir Sháh,—Ahmad Sháh Abdállí struck in India. If we bear in mind that the striking of coins in India is a prerogative of royalty, and one which has always been exercised the moment a man sat on the throne; moreover if we remember that the mint was carried with the royal camp,* we shall at once see that if we collect specimens of each year and of each mintage, we shall have a chronological account of the events of the reign in coins: we shall also see the expansion of each king's rule or otherwise.

Ahmad Sháh invaded India several times. On each occasion he struck coins. If in a place only a few days, the numismatic records are not silent about the visit. The king may have been dominant before his coming and after he had gone. But during the time the invader stayed, he coined. Hence we often have coins struck in one year at the same place by the conquering and the conquered ruler. This it is which lends interest to the coins of Ahmad Sháh Durrání. They are not old. But they are becoming rarer every day. Indeed it is seldom they are now met with. As they are the only relics of the man who

* I have lately become possessed of a dirham of Báber's struck in the camp (Urdú درواہ). *Urdú Zafar Qarín* is a common mint of Akbar's.

saved us the trouble of destroying the Mahrattas, and as they illustrate his movements in India so exactly, I have deemed it worthy of me as a numismatist to rescue the coins from oblivion and the inevitable melting-pot.

Ahmad Sháh was no relative of Nádír Sháh. He was by birth of the Abdállí tribe and was probably born at Multán. The Abdállí tribe trace their origin to a descendant of Abraham named Qís who flourished in the time of Muhammad, and who embraced the doctrines of Islám. I do not think this the place to go further into this matter. Suffice it to say, that Ahmad Sháh was the most trusted of all the members of the court of Nádír. Nádír was not happy with respect to his own children. During his lifetime he is said to have told Ahmad Khán that after his death, he would be king.

Nádír Sháh was slain by his officers on the 11th of Jamádí-ul-*Ákhir* 1160 A. H. The next day Ahmad *Khán* defeated the conspirators, and possessing himself of all the treasure of his murdered master, fled to Kandahár. There is a story told by the historian of Ahmad Sháh that, when Ahmad had performed two days' journey towards Kandahár, a faqír named Sábír Sháh with whom he had been previously intimate, approached him and said "Now Ahmad Sháh you are indeed king." When the king said that he had not yet been crowned, the faqír making a platform of earth led the king to it, and taking some grass put it on his head, saying, "This platform is your throne and this grass your crown. I proclaim you king by the name of Ahmad Sháh Durrání." This name the king adopted instead of his former tribal name Abdállí. Durr is a pearl. Ahmad on some of his coins styles himself Durr-i-Durrán the pearl of pearls. This Sábír Sháh at first stayed with Ahmad, but being sent on a message to Lahore, he was there murdered.

Arriving in Kandahár Ahmad Sháh was formally crowned. He ordered coins to be struck bearing the following couplet:—

حکم شد از قادر بیچون باحمد شاه
سکه زن بر سیم وزر از اوج ماهی تا به ماه

Immediately afterwards we find him on his way through Gazní to Kábul which he reduced, and afterwards he obtained possession of Pesháwar, whence he returned to Kandahár. Settling his affairs there and hastily collecting an army of about 12,000 horse with which he entered the Panjáb, he was before Lahore, ere the letter containing an account of his invasion had reached Dehlí. The Governor of Lahore fled, and all the arsenal fell into the conqueror's hands. He did not let the grass grow under his feet. Meanwhile the worn-out Mogul Muhammad Sháh sent his son and prime minister Qamar-ud-Dín to

dispute his progress. The armies met at Málúpúr, six kos from Sarhind. There were skirmishes for several days, during one of which the prime minister Qamar-ud-Dín was killed. In a general engagement which ensued, the Afgháns bethought them of some rockets they had found at Lahore. They essayed to use them against the enemy, but unfortunately they did not know how to discharge them. Instead therefore of injuring their foes, they hurt themselves, for they put the rockets in the wrong way. The Durrání army being thus self-defeated fled. This series of engagements and the flight of the army took place in Rabía ul Awwal 1161 A. H., or within 10 months of the murder of Nádir, *i. e.*, in the first year of Ahmad Sháh Durrání.

My first rupee (Plate II, fig. 1) illustrates this campaign. It was struck at Lahore in his first year سنة احدى. The inscriptions on it are as follows:—

در دران احمد شاه بارشاه احدى
ضرب دار السلطنة لاهور
ميمذت مانوس

The reverse has on it the couplet given above and 11, portions of the date 1161. The meaning of this couplet may be thus rendered:—

Ahmad Sháh, received an order from the Unlike Powerful One
To strike coins in silver and gold from the height of the fish to the
Moon.

As Ahmad Sháh the son of Muhammad Sháh was returning from the battle in which the Durrání Ahmad was defeated, he heard of the death of his father which took place on the 26th of Rabía us Sání 1161.

I have a coin of the 2nd year of Ahmad Sháh Durrání. On the reverse it has:—

جلوس ميمذت مانوس سنة ۲
ضرب پيشاور

I have seen no early Afghán coins struck at Kábul or Kandahár; so I judge they must be very rare. The Dehlí Ahmad must have recovered Sarhind and Lahore the same year, for I have rupees struck at these two towns in his first year 1161 A. H. Sarhind in those days must have been a glorious city, if the space now covered with ruins was inhabited.

Meer Munnoo the son of Qamar-ud-Dín was made governor of Lahore. He destroyed the fort Rám Rownee which the Sikhs had made at Amritsar. The Durrání hearing of the death of Qamar-ud-Dín in battle and of the Dehlí emperor's after it again crossed the Indus. He was, however, persuaded to retire. To this second invasion I attribute the Pesháwar coin of his second year given above.

Meer Munnoo grew strong in Lahore. He became almost independent of Dehlí, and the tribute he had promised to the Durrání king in order to persuade him to retire, he never paid. This brought Ahmad Sháh again to the Panjáb. Meer Munnoo waited for him under the walls of Lahore where a battle was fought, the result of which was, that he was taken prisoner. When brought before the conqueror, he was asked, "Had you taken me prisoner, what should you have done?" "Cut off your head and sent it to my master the Emperor of Dehlí," was his answer. "Now I have you in my power, what shall I do with you?" was the next question. He replied "If you are a tyrant destroy me, if you are merciful forgive me." This so pleased the Durrání that he was reinstated as governor of Lahore. All the treasure of Lahore fell into Ahmad Sháh's hands. Lahore and Multán fell under the sway of the Afgháns. These matters occupied the 3rd, 4th and 5th years of the king's reign. The second coin drawn illustrates this conquest of Lahore. The obverse is occupied by the Persian couplet. The reverse has the following inscription:—

جلوس ميمنت مانوس سنه ۵
ضرب دار السلطنة لاهور

I have two rupees of Ahmad Sháh of Dehlí struck at Lahore in *his* 4th and 5th years 1164 and 1165 A. H. So his power was not altogether gone.

The 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th coins illustrate the hold the Durrání king kept on the annexed province of Multán and the trans-Indus provinces Of Nos. 3 and 4 I give only the reverses. They are as follows:—

No. 3. ضرب ملتان سنه ۶ جلوس ميمنت مانوس

No. 4. ضرب ديوة سنه ۷ جلوس ميمنت مانوس

No. 5 is unique:—

Obverse در دران احمد شاه ۷

Reverse 1167 ۱۱ ۶۷ ضرب پيشاور

No. 6 is a beautiful coin belonging to Sir Edward Clive Bayley who kindly gave me permission to copy it:

Obverse in lozenge:— در دران احمد ۷۰ ۱۱

Round this is the Persian couplet, and the date ۱۱۷۰.

Reverse:— ضرب دارالامان ملتان جلوس ۹ ميمنت مانوس

Besides the above I have a rupee of *Multán* of his 5th year and one of the 7th. Also one of *Bhakkhar* of the 7th year, which shows that these parts were under the sway of the Durrání king. There is a rupee of the 10th year struck at *Lahore*, in the British Museum.

These five years, from the 5th to the 10th of the reign of Ahmad Sháh Durrání, were full of events which happened both in Lahore and Dehlí. Meer Munnoo, governor of Lahore, died of cholera. His widow Mugalána Begum took up the reins of government and held them with a strong hand. But her son-in-law, Ghází-ud-Dín, invaded the Panjáb, and with the aid of Adína Beg ruled it, until Ahmad Sháh hearing of the disturbances in the country again visited the scene of his former conquests. In Dehlí Muhammad Sháh, the Mogul Emperor, had been dethroned, imprisoned, blinded and murdered and Alamgír the second had been placed on the throne 1167 A. H. It was in 1170 A. H. that Ahmad the Durrání returned to India, Mugalána Begum met him with an army which she united to his at Lahore. He made his son, Tímúr Sháh, Nizám of Lahore and Multán, while he himself passed on through Sarhind to Dehlí. Coins Nos. 15 and 16 of my plate illustrate this fact. The obverse of these rupees has the following Persian inscription on it:—

بِعَالَمِ يَافُوتِ سَكَّةَ تَيْمُورِ شَاهِ نِظَامِ
بِحَكْمِ خُدا وَرِسْرولِ اِيامِ 1170 1170

The reverse of No. 15 has:—

جَلُوسِ مِيهِنْتِ مَانُوسِ سَنَةِ اِحد
ضَرْبِ خَارِالسُلْطَنَةِ لَاهُورِ

Another rupee with exactly the same inscriptions has the year 1171 A. H., thus showing that the 1st year of Tímúr Sháh's Nizámat was in 1170-1 A. H.

The reverse of No. 16 has:—

جَلُوسِ مِيهِنْتِ مَانُوسِ سَنَةِ ۲
ضَرْبِ دَارِالْاِمْنانِ مِلْتانِ

The obverse of this, No. 16, has the same inscription as No. 15 but without any year. (Just as I had finished this sentence a coin dealer brought me over 200 rupees to examine. I found one of Multán of the 1st year of Tímúr Sháh's Nizámat 1170 A. H.)

When Ahmad Sháh arrived at Dehlí he began to plunder. From the son of his old enemy Qamar-ud-Dín he obtained two krore rupees' worth of ashrafís, and a krore rupees' worth of jewels. He employed Mugalána Begum on this work, and as she knew all the people of Dehlí, she caused a lot of wealth to be brought in. Besides this the Durrání married the daughter of Muhammad Sháh, and Tímúr Sháh married the daughter of Alamgír II who seems to have helped in the plundering

of his own capital. Ahmad Sháh stayed in all about 40 days in Dehlí, coin No. 7 of my plates illustrates this short period.

Obv.— The Persian couplet and the year 1170.

Rev.— سنه ۱۱ جلوس صیمنت مانوس

ضرب دارالخلافة شاه جهان آباد

I have seen rupees apparently from the same dies. As Ahmad Sháh was in Dehlí only 40 days, it is not at all wonderful that I have a rupee of Alamgír II struck in his 4th year 1170 A. H., the year of Ahmad Sháh's invasion. During this occupation of Dehlí Mathurá was plundered. Its idols and temples were overthrown and many were massacred. The historian says that not a single straw was left in Dehlí. Alamgír II was restored to the throne, but the creatures of Ahmad were left everywhere. In passing through Amritsar "hundreds of Sikhs were slain and thousands of houses destroyed." Tímúr Sháh was left in Lahore with an efficient general, and Ahmad betook himself and his plunder to Kandahár.

No sooner had the Durrání sovereign left the country, than Adína Beg who had been hiding in the mountains attacked Lahore and took it. But this must have been about 1173 A. H., as the British Museum has rupees of Tímúr as Nizám of Lahore for 1171 and 1173, the year of the Nizámat on this latter one being 3. Adína Beg prospered. But in Dehlí matters went from bad to worse. The Mahrattas, being called in to assist on one side of the quarrel, made themselves masters of the city. They then advanced on Sarhind which they plundered. Lahore next fell before them. After this they attacked the prince Tímúr Sháh who had entrenched himself at Imánábád. He was defeated and he fled to Pesháwar pursued by the Mahrattas. The Sikhs chose this opportunity for showing their heads. Their numbers had been increasing in spite of persecution. They rebuilt Amritsar after they had forced Muhammadans to clean it. They held Lahore even for a short time at this period.

I have one rupee of Ahmad Sháh's 11th year, and one also of his 13th year struck at *Lahore*. These must have been struck when his officers were paramount in that city.

Álamgír reigned nominally in Dehlí till his 6th year. I have a rupee of his 6th year struck in Lahore in 1172. One of his 5th year, struck in Kashmír, is dated 1173 A. H. One of his 5th year and one of his 6th, both struck at Ahmadnagar—Farrukhábád, are both dated 1172. Both these were obtained from Quettah. Can it be possible they were part of the plunder taken away by Ahmad Sháh after the campaign I am about to describe?

When Ahmad Sháh saw the Panjáb lost to him, he returned, to the dismay of the Mahrattas who fled as he approached. Owing to his presence Alamgír was murdered. Alí Gaur Sháh Alam was away in Bengal. The Mahrattas retiring, Ahmad Sháh took Dehlí. This took place in 1173 A. H. Dehlí was given over to plunder for 3 days. The whole Dúáb fell into his hands. In 1174 the battle of Paniput was fought in which the Mahrattas were utterly defeated. It will thus be seen that this invasion occupied about two years, the 14th and 15th of Ahmad Sháh's reign. Coins Nos. 8—13 of my plate exemplify this period. They all have the Persian couplet on their obverses. The reverses are as follows:—

No. 8. *Reverse*:— جلوبس صدیمت مانوس سنه ۱۱۴
ضرب انوله

Aonlah is a town of Rohilkand on the railway between Barellí and Chandausí.

No. 9. *Reverse*:— جلوبس صدیمت مانوس سنه ۱۱۴
ضرب مرادا باد

This coin is the property of W. Theobald, Esq. of Bedford.

No. 10. *Reverse*:— جلوبس صدیمت مانوس سنه ۱۱۴
ضرب دارالخلافة شاه جهان آباد

No. 11. *Reverse*:— جلوبس صدیمت مانوس سنه ۱۱۴
ضرب اتك

No. 12. *Reverse*:— جلوبس صدیمت مانوس سنه ۱۱۴
ضرب بریلی

No. 13. *Reverse*:— جلوبس صدیمت مانوس سنه ۱۱۵
ضرب سهرند

Sarhind is always spelt on coins Sahrind. The obverse of this coin is dated 1174 A. H.

Besides these coins which I have drawn I have Lahore, 14th, 1173; 15th, 1175; Sháhjahánábád, 15th, 1174; Lahore, 16th, 1175; 16th, 1176; Sahrind, 16th, 1175. Mr. Theobald has one struck at Farrukhábád during this period.

Ahmad Sháh disappeared from India immediately after the battle of Paniput. He left governors in Sarhind and Lahore. The Government at Dehlí was impoverished and powerless. The Sikhs who under all the changes of government had bided their time, plundered, fled away, grown rich and numerous, began again to assume power. They built a fort at Gujránwálla. They defeated the governor of Lahore.

They troubled the governor of Sarhind. They laid siege to the town of Jandíála, 11 miles from Amritsar. It was this last matter which brought Ahmad Sháh again on the scene.

They say that one night Ahmad Sháh was in a quiet sleep, all at once in the middle of the night he woke up, and ordering his body-guard of 300 horse to attend him, he took his way towards India. He ordered his Aid-de-Camps to tell the prime-minister of his departure, and to get the whole army ready and follow him with the greatest expedition. Ahmad making double marches was soon in the neighbourhood of Lahore, but with him were only 10 or 12 horsemen. Meeting with a peasant he asked him where the Sikhs were. He was told that to the number of 70,000 they were encamped before Jandíála. Hearing this he departed at once for Jandíála. The besiegers when they heard of Ahmad Sháh's arrival at once fled. The besieged could not understand it. They sent out spies to see if it were a trick of the Sikhs to draw them out of their fortifications. The spies reported that they could see nothing of the enemy. But under a tree about two kos away, they found a man sitting under a canopy. Some ten or twelve armed attendants were with him and were treating him with the profoundest respect. When the governor of Jandíála heard this, he at once knew that it was Ahmad Sháh who had come to his relief. He went out to thank his Sovereign and was received with kindness. Soon after the general arrived with the Afghan army. The general biding his time as Easterns always have done and do still, asked Ahmad Sháh why he had left Kábul so suddenly. He answered that as he was sleeping Muhammad had appeared to him, and told him of the siege of Jandíála and the distress of the besieged, and had ordered him to start at once to relieve the town. So trusting in God he had started leaving orders for the army to follow him.

After staying a few days at Jandíála, Ahmad Sháh crossed the Bías and Sutlaj, and defeated the main body of the Sikhs who were just about to commence an action with his governor of Sarhind. This action known as the Ghuloo Ghára, or great disaster, took place about 20 miles south of Ludiana. The founder of the present Pattiála family was among the prisoners. "He was declared a rája of the State and dismissed with honour."* I shall refer to this further on. Ahmad Sháh "the very ideal of the Afghán genius, fitted for conquest, yet incapable of empire" immediately returned to Kandahár. He never attempted to improve a victory or govern a country he had conquered. This incursion took place in the year 1176 A. H. The Sarhind coin I have mentioned above, seems to illustrate this period. It is of his

* Cunningham's History of the Sikhs, p. 101.

16th year. The year is 1175. But that must be a mistake. However the Lahore coins go on steadily. One of the 17th year is dated 1176, another 1177 A. H. One of the 18th year has 1177, another 1178; a 19th year one has 1178. The Dehlí and Dúáb coins cease. Ahmad Sháh no longer ruled there. 1178 A. H. is equal to 1764 A. D. which is equivalent to 1821 of the Samvat era. Now in 1822 A. S., the Sikh commonwealth struck their first rupees of Lahore. (See my Coins of the Sikhs.) Hence we shall not expect to find any rupees of the 20th year of Ahmad Sháh struck at Lahore, I have sought in vain for one of this year. After the 16th year, the Cis-Sutlaj coins cease.

After the Ghuloo Ghára Ahmad Sháh, on his return through Lahore, made Kábulí Mull his governor there. Zein Khán had been left governor of Sarhind. He was defeated by the Sikhs with immense slaughter. The town of Sarhind was utterly destroyed. The Sikhs actually carried their victorious arms into the Dúáb. It was this loss of Sarhind which brought Ahmad Sháh again to India in 1178 A. H. No very accurate account seems to exist of this incursion. It seems it was not a success. "12,000 Afgháns suddenly deserted and retraced their steps towards Kábul. The Sháh was obliged to break up his camp and follow them."* He never returned. This last incursion took place in his 18th year. The Sikhs seizing Lahore struck coins there first in 1822 A. S., as I have shown. I have seen rupees of theirs struck at Lahore in 23, 24 and 25. And yet their rule could not have been uninterrupted, for I have a rupee of Lahore of Ahmad Sháh struck in his 21st year and 1180 A. H., also one of his 22nd year is in the British Museum.

No. 14 of my plate contains the following reverse:—

ضرب ديرة سنة ۲۲

Dera I have seen on some coins changed to Deraját. This is of course the Trans-Indus Province. I have in my cabinet a coin of Ahmad's 25th year struck at Pesháwar. It was to this part of India his rule was restricted before he died.

The coin No. 17 is a modern Puttiála rupee presented to me by the foreign minister of the State. It has on the obverse the whole of the couplet of Ahmad Sháh who created the 1st Máhárája of Pattiála. On the reverse there is the same inscription as on No. 13. The mint is Sarhind. The katár or dagger is the sign of the present Mahárája. As a rule the rupees of this State are thick and dumpy, consequently they never have more than a third of the inscription on them. They are about the same in diameter as a four-anna piece and about 4 times

* Kángra Settlement Report by G. Barnes, Esq.

as thick. This is the only thing in India to remind us that Ahmad Sháh invaded this country no less than seven times.

Thus I have shown how coins illustrate the history of one of the conquerors of India. Never have I been able so well to illustrate the Persian line :—

هرکه شمشیر زند سکه بدامش خوانند

“People read coins in the name of every one who smites with the sword.”

We have seen how Ahmad Sháh of Dehlí and Ahmad Sháh Durrání struck coins in the same year in the same places, as did also Alamgír II, and the Durrání. Sháh Alam II never coined in any trans-Sutlaj province. Coins were struck by Ranjít Deo in Jummoo in his name. But no rupee of Lahore or Multán with the name of Sháh Alam II has yet been found. The Sikhs became absolute masters of their own land, and all throughout the years of the long reign of Sháh Alam II, kept the mint at Amritsar, Lahore and Multán fully employed in striking coins in praise of Nának and Gobind Singh.

The numbers under the coins show the weight of each in grains.



LIST OF ERRATA.

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- p. 22, l. 9, *read* सिर मैं असि
p. 28, note*, *for on read in.*
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